

1. *How will you implement the Governor's proposed FY 2010 reduction to your programs? Will you decrease particular services, offer fewer programs, reduce staff time on a particular programs, furlough or layoff staff, or take some other measures in response to the reduction?*

The Office of Empowerment (\$295,500 Net FY 09) – 8% reduction or \$23,640
Reference: Iowa Legislative Services 'Blue Book' pages 83-85.

Options include:

- Reduce the level of support provided to the EC parent website and coordination of other early childhood websites. (from \$46,000 to \$22,360)
- Reduce Iowa Empowerment Board meetings per year (currently meet 5 or 6 times per year).
- Discontinue the two local site visits of the Iowa Empowerment Board.
- Furloughs of two professional staff members as necessary.

All of the Professional Development funding is outsourced through a competitive bid process. The 8% reduction would mean that fewer projects would be supported.

From the Quality Improvement funding, a 13.5% cut to the Family Support Coordinator is equivalent to 35 unpaid days.

At the local level, a 12.8% reduction will likely mean lay offs and furloughs to local agency staff and program staff that deliver services for young children and their families or to people that directly care for young children. It is unknown how many program staff at all agencies that receive empowerment dollars would be impacted.

2. *What three programs, services, or functions would you want to spare from reduction, in part or total, if possible?*
- Family Support Coordinator position covered out of the Quality Improvement funding. The person in this position has made a great deal of progress in the last two years to ensure that Iowa is investing our family support and parent education dollars in quality programs embedded with evidence-based practices. Iowa is leading the nation in this effort. No other state has progressed as far as we have in regards to quality program standards and credentialing family support programs. (See Addendum 2 for update about items implemented since creation of this position.)
 - Family Support and Parent Education pieces of empowerment. (This would include 0-3 funding as well as 0-5 family support activities.) These programs target children prenatal to age 3, which is the period of peak brain development, and the period of most founded cases of child abuse. (During FY '08 Community Empowerment Area boards report that \$19,185,070 of Empowerment funding utilized for this type of program. It impacted 36,224 children ages 0-5. Also, a two-year decline in child abuse has been reported. "In recent years, Iowa has undertaken several efforts to expand family support

programming, with the result that many more families are receiving instruction and support. These expanded efforts may have had some success in strengthening families and, thereby, reducing abuse.” (As reported by Prevent Child Abuse Iowa., January 2, 2009).

- First Years First Grant program. This program is an opportunity to leverage state dollars with local and private funds. (See additional information in Question 5 and Addendum 1.)

3. *What three to five programs, services, or functions could be reduced or eliminated with the least impact to recipients and/or the Empowerment Program?*

- The funding to support the early childhood parent website and other early childhood coordinated websites.
- Professional development dollars. Funded activities through this appropriation would not directly impact young children or their families.
- The low income preschool tuition assistance, in areas where the state funded four-year-old preschool program exists.

Other options include placing additional parameters on local empowerment boards using the funds:

- Require a certain percentage be used for evidence based programming.
- Require a certain percentage be targeted to low income families.
- Providers could also start charging for services to higher income families that could afford to pay for the services.
- Focus all parent education/family support to children 0 – 3. This strategy would focus the program where the impact is highest when children are prenatal to age 3. It would also reduce administrative work at the local level by eliminating the need to maintain separate funding streams.

A state-level option would include eliminating the Parents as Teachers (PAT) state office. The state receives no funding for the office and while the statewide data is helpful, it's not critical.

4. *How will the economic downturn affect your services and the cost to provide those services? What are the key factors? What are the trends?*

- Home-based family support services are impacted greatly by the fluctuation in gasoline prices. Although 84% of family support workers and parent educators have a bachelor's degree or higher, their starting salaries are typically between \$22,000 - \$24,000 annually. Since they do not receive built-in salary increases, their pay may remain stagnant for years while the cost of living continues to grow. Home based workers use their personal vehicles to travel to the homes of their clients and are reimbursed at a set rate per mile for travel. When gas prices increase, their already-low salaries drop further in effect.

- A positive trend is that there is less turn over in the field in an economic downturn as workers are focused on keeping their current jobs.
- The economic downturn is adding to the stress level of thousands of Iowa families that are out of work or worried they soon will be. Research has demonstrated that poverty is the leading indicator for adverse outcomes for young children. The younger the child, the more devastating the impact of poverty. Many Iowa parents are consumed with worry about literally keeping the roof over their heads. That kind of worry does not leave much time and attention to ensuring that the home is a stimulating, learning, nurturing environment for their young children. Family support services guarantee that at least a portion of their time will be dedicated to enhancing parenting skills and maintaining or creating that nurturing, stimulating, learning environment in their home. As more parents are out of work, more children are spending more time at home in the care of their parents.
- Parents with preschool-age children will be impacted if preschool support funding is reduced or eliminated. In FY '08, Community Empowerment Areas report that 11,111 preschool age children received support either through tuition assistance or supportive services to the preschool program.

5. Please provide a detailed breakdown of revenue and expenditures for the First Years First effort for FY 2007, FY 2008, and FY 2009.

Detailed breakdown of revenue/expenditures for FYF

First Years First Gifts and Grants Account			
FY Year	Revenue	Expenditures	Description
2007	1,000,000		
		31,099.70	early childhood business community investment advisory council. (HF 2769) created; expenses for them to meet and for a paid facilitator to carry out the legislative language to create the report that was released January 2007.
2008	1,000,000		
		2,782	marketing expenses to create a logo, image, etc. Created First Years First
		\$64,617	Merit Resources - coordinator to establish this program and effort
		\$4,590	Travel expenses for coordinator to attend national conferences to learn more about other states in this area. Also travel in state to begin to share message of this developing program.
2009	250,000		
		19,367	Merit Resources - coordinator for beginning the grant program
		1,825	marketing expenses to modify logo, image, etc. Refining First Years First marketing materials based on committee input, state-level business response and changing economy
		89,760	Annual Salary information for statewide FYF Coordinator (this includes salary and benefits)

More information regarding FYF found in Addendum 1.

Addendum 1 – FYF

2006 legislation created an early childhood business investment advisory council. (EC-BIAC) (HF 2769)

- Council formed and submitted a report to the Iowa Legislature January 2007
http://www.empowerment.state.ia.us/common/pdf/bciac_2007_final_report.pdf
- \$1 million appropriated, use restricted to committee meeting and creation of report.

2007 legislation (SF 588) supported that funding be allocated to the Iowa Empowerment Fund for implementation of the business community investment advisory council report and recommendations.

A new committee of the IEB was formed to follow-thru with recommendations from the council, and develop a program based on the recommendations in the report. An identity for this private/public partnership was created: First Years First (FYF).

The original report recommended that, for the grant program, a private match be sought at the state level as well as the local level by applicants. At the state level - before the grant program could begin a match of \$250,000 was to be raised.

Problems faced:

- Due to vagueness in the Code language, legal counsel was sought to assist with creating and utilizing the funding.
- Private businesses were not receptive to giving money to the state. Legal counsel advised that a not-for-profit organization could not be formed to assist with the project. Then worked with the IRS to determine what would be necessary for private sector donation to receive tax benefit.

Staff hired thru Merit Resources, assisted with the identity to create First Years First and IRS conversations as well as initial conversation with possible business partners for statewide contribution to begin grant program.

As match and the attention of business leaders, and philanthropic organizations was being sought, the FYF Committee began to develop criteria for the grant program.

During FY 08, FYF was identified in Administrative Rules for the funding and authority for a grant program was established.

In Spring 2008, officially began seeking for state-level match from the private sector to support the grant program. Floods, natural disasters and a downturn in the economy resulted in the FYF Committee not receiving the necessary \$250,000 in private match in order to utilize the legislated funds for the grant program.

During the Summer 2008, the Committee again worked with legal counsel and collectively determined that a state match was not necessary in order to move forward with grant program. The private match could support the program at the local level. Committee members felt that in FY 09, the timing would be perfect to promote this type of private/public venture to reflect partnerships that support Iowa communities and families with young children in those communities. First Years First Business Committee recommends pursuing state level private match during FY 2010 to support continuation of the grant program.

Anticipated future activities:

- In March, administrative rule adoption to support the program will begin.
- An RFP will be released in 2009 for local communities to develop public-private investment partnerships to expand/enhance early childhood programs. It is expected that once the RFP is released, local grant allocations will expend a significant portion of the funds towards evidence-based practices.
- *Business Leader Summit on Early Childhood Investment.* A grant application has been submitted to the Partnership for America's Economic Success for Iowa to host a summit to promote private sector leaders' involvement of this work. Our goal is to use this opportunity to build awareness about the FYF grant program.

Addendum 2 – Iowa Family Support Update

The following are family support (includes parent education) strategies/products implemented in Iowa:

1. Basic Family Support Program Standards (includes group parent education)
2. Iowa Family Support Credential process that includes technical assistance and an onsite peer evaluation
3. Five common Family Support outcomes across all models and required assessment tools for outcome reporting
4. Evidence based Family Support Workbook that locally-developed program models can use to infuse evidence based practices into their model.
5. Contracted with the University of Iowa - National Resource Center for Family Centered Services for the development of a comprehensive Family Support Supervisor Certification Curricula. The curricula development includes the development of core competencies for family support workers and supervisors. It will be piloted this spring and available nationwide beginning July 1, 2009.
6. A train the trainer model for ensuring that all family support workers, birthing hospital staff and maternal/child health staff are competent in the use of a maternal depression screening tool. We also developed local referral and treatment protocols.

Current activities:

1. Central point-of-intake structure at the local level to match families to available programs.
2. Coordinating and planning family support professional development opportunities on a state-wide basis.
3. The implementation of a statewide shaken baby prevention program that includes family support workers in a larger, comprehensive approach to prevention.
4. Statewide screening and referral process for parents of newborns.